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THE
DEATH OF ABEL,
AN
ORATORIO,
FROM THE
ITALIAN OF METASTASIO,
AND THE
MORNING HYMN,
FROM
MILTON'S PARADISE LOST;

As it is performed

At the THEATRE ROYAL in the Hay-makert.

The MUSIC by
SIGNOR NICCOLO PICCINI.

WITH
ADDITIONAL CHORUS
From other eminent MASTERS.

Sold at the THEATRE.

[PRICE SIX PENCE ONLY.]

1768.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ADAM,

CAIN,

EVE,

ABEL.

CHORUS of ANGELS.



THE
DEATH OF ABLE.

PART THE FIRST,

THE

Morning Hymn from Milton's Paradise Lost.

R E C I T A T I V E .

TH E S E are thy glorious works, parent of good;
Almighty, thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable, who sits above these Heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

A I R.

Speak ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels, for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing.

A 2

CHORUS.

C H O R U S (PERGOLESI.)

Ye in Heaven,
On earth join all ye creatures to extol,
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.

R E C I T A T I V E.

*Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn,
With thy bright circlet.*

A I R.

Praise him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.

R E C I T A T I V E.

*Thou sun; of this great world, both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater.*

A I R.

Sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon hast gain'd, and when
thou fall'st.

R E C I T A T I V E.

*Moon that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st
With the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wand'ring fires, that move
In mystic dance, not without song;*

A I R.

(5)

A I R.

Resound

His praise, who out of darkness call'd up light.

R E C I T A T I V E.

*Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run,
Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix,
And nourish all things,*

A I R.

Let your ceaseless change,
Vary to our great Maker, still new praise.

A I R.

His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breath soft or loud ; and wave your tops ye pines,
With ev'ry plant, in sign of worship wave.

R E C I T A T I V E, *accompany'd.*

*Ye mists and exhalations that now rise,
From hill, or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author, rise ;
Whether to deck with clouds th' uncolour'd sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers :*

C H O R U S. (CARISSIMI.)

Rising or falling, still advance his praise.

A I R.

Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.

D U E T T O.

DUETTO. (GALLIARD.)

Join voices, all ye living souls ; ye birds, ...
That singing up to heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings, and in your notes his praise.

R E C I T A T I V E.

*Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep ;
Witness if I be silent morn or even,
To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.*

C H O R U S. (PERGOLESÌ.)

Hail universal Lord ; be bounteous still,
To give us only good ; and if the night
Have gather'd ought of evil, or conceal'd,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.

END OF THE HYMN.

PART THE SECOND.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd,*

ABEL. **H**O *W* wonderful art thou, almighty God!
In all the various works which thou hast
made?

*I'll praise thy name as long as I have being,
And daily offer up my humble prayers.*

Come, O come, and join with me to praise him.

*Who can doubt his goodness? He hath deign'd
To accept the humble offering I have made!*

My God! Ah, what am I before thine eyes?

*Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?
Or what the son of man that thou regardest him?*

RECITATIVE.

CAIN. *Whence, Abel, this uncommon chearfulness?*

ABEL. *Come, my dear brother, come and share my
transports:*

My offering was acceptable to God.

CAIN. *Has Abel the presumption to affirm it?*

ABEL. *The first and fairest lamb of all my flock,
As I was off'ring to our great Creator,*

I saw

*I saw a flame, bright as the glorious sun,
Burn up the victim, and then disappear.*

CAIN. *The tale is strange, and I much doubt its truth.
Mother, hear Abel tell a wondrous tale,
And tell me, if you think it can be true?*

EVE. *Cease your doubts of him; I saw it.*

CAIN. *What!*

EVE. *The bright celestial fire that did consume
His offering on the altar.*

CAIN. *Is it then true?*

EVE. *It is; be certain of it.*

CAIN. *(Dreadful certainty.)*

EVE. *My sons,
Your homage you have paid to Heaven:
To your employments now let each depart.*

ABEL. *How pleasing your command, my honour'd
mother.*

A I R.

*Forth to the flow'ry mead,
To verdant pastures fair;
My fleecy flock I'll lead,
And guard with tender care,*

*By name I know them all,
The little lambs rejoice;
When one by one I call,
To hear their shepherds voice.*

CHORUS. (CORELLI.)

*Hail ye fertile fields and plains,
Where innocence, with pleasure reigns;*

Whence

Where flocks and herds at random stray,
And all the shepherd's toils repay.

R E C I T A T I V E.

EVE. What sudden grief, my son, hath seized
your mind ;
Why are your eyes thus fixed on the earth ;
Why dost thou tremble ; and what means that sigh ?

CAIN. What cause, what reason, have I to be
cheerful ?

EVE. Dost thou not find one in thy brother's joy ?

CAIN. No ; that, that is my greatest torment.

EVE. Is that which gives a joy to every heart
A pain to your's ? A brother's bliss your torment !
Alas ! if you should cherish envious thoughts,
You'll find each instant motives for new griefs.

A I R.

How can yon flowing stream be clear,
That wand'ring flows its length'ned course ;
If near the fountain it appear,
Disturb'd and muddy at its source.

R E C I T A T I V E.

CAIN. Confusion ! must I tamely bear these insults ?
Envy itself, extols my happy rival ;
The more I wish to see the boy depress'd,
The greater still he rises to my view.

A I R.

Endless torments rend my breast,
To see the happy stripling's joy ;
I rave, I'm stung, my soul's oppress'd,
I hate, abhor, yet know not why.

B

ANGEL.

R E C I T A T I V E.

ANGEL. Why art thou in wrath? Speak, answer me;
To know a sin, will lead you to repentance.
Dost thou not know, that if thou doest well,
Thou wilt be found acceptable to God?

CAIN. If I do not -----

ANGEL. The sin is on thy head.

CAIN. Then fate -----

ANGEL. No more. I know what thou would'st say;
Thy appetite of sin is subject to thee,
Exert the pow'r thou hast to conquer it.
Man a free agent is; free will was given
To leave him no excuse for his offence.

A I R.

Do not the faultless stars condemn,
Nor dare arraign thy destiny;
Reproach thy guilty self, not them;
The will of human race is free.

Pervert not by this weak pretence,
The blessings thy Creator sent;
Reject this fancied influence,
Nor turn rewards to punishment.

R E C I T A T I V E.

CAIN. (Still thus insulted with a brother's praise,
For him must suffer taunts and vile reproach!)

ANGEL. If, after this kind warning, thou offendest,
The sin is doubled on thy guilty head;
Beware of envy and ambitious snares,
The first of crimes that did appear in Heav'n.

CHORUS

CHORUS of ANGELS.

So down to shades of endless night,
 To punish the misuse of will,
 From realms of ever radiant light,
 Rebelling, envious angels fell.
 This dread example to mankind is given,
 Not to abuse the gifts of bounteous Heaven.

R E C I T A T I V E.

CAIN. He comes, the hated boy, driving his flock;
 His countenance declares his joyous soul;
 His looks upbraid me. I'll avoid the meeting.

ABEL. Why does my brother fly, when I appear?

CAIN. Can I presume t'approach Heav'n's chosen
 favourite?

ABEL. Alas! what new unusual speech is this?
 Oh! leave me not in such perplexity.

CAIN. All know thy triumph; I have heard it once;
 Must I each moment listen to thy boasting?

ABEL. Boasting! of what? What have I but
 from God?

All I enjoy is what his bounty gave.

CAIN. No more; away; henceforward thou alone,
 Shalt on the altar sacrifice to God;
 Thy off'rings he accepts, but mine rejects.

ABEL. What do I hear! What has my brother said?
 This is a sin much greater than the first.
 Almighty Lord! what different effects,
 Thy awful voice produces in our hearts.

A I R.

'Tis the same herb we see,
 That feeds the snake and bee;
 Yet doth the nurt'ring juice
 A wide effect produce.

The flow'r, that deadly poison grows
 Within the venom'd snake ;
 From the honey'd bee o'erflows,
 And sweetest liquors make.

R E C I T A T I V E.

CAIN. Rash, tedious boy, dar'st thou presume to
 preach?

ABEL. Oh! brother, do not misconceive my
 meaning :

"Tis tender love alone that makes me speak.

CAIN. I scorn your tender love---begone---

ABEL. But hate---

CAIN. Is now the only comfort I have left.

ABEL. Alas, can'st thou delight in hating me!
 Love me again, I'll be what thou commandest.

CAIN. Peace; each word creates new reasons to
 detest thee.

ABEL. What is my crime?

CAIN. Thy having none.

ADAM. Tell me, my sons, from whence arose
 this strife?

Already have ye lost that sympathy,
 Your blood contracted from your mother's veins?

CAIN. Address these stern reproaches to that boy;
 He calls himself the favourite of Heav'n,
 And swells with pride that is not to be borne.

ADAM. Did I less know the temper of my sons,
 I might perhaps believe thy accusation.
 Is Abel guilty, 'cause he's not like thee?
 Rather than envy, imitate his virtues.

A I R.

Through life's great voyage,
A safer guide pursuing ;
From earliest age,
Avoid impending ruin ;
By this yet glim'ring ray,
Return to the right way.

R E C I T A T I V E.

CAIN. Now triumph Abel ; all are set against me.
My mother comes ; try all your arts on her ;
Too well I know that she is not my friend.

EVE. My son, thou art thyself thy only foe.

ADAM. His soul's diseas'd, nor does he wish for
health ;
But scorns the hand that would apply relief.

EVE. Ah ! cease to speak thus harshly ; still I've
hopes,

He will repent, he will detest his guilt,
And imitate his parent's penitence.

Come Cain, my child, confirm thy mother's hopes ;
Restore again thy brother to thy love.

CAIN: (It ne'er shall be.)

EVE. What do I see ! does stubborn Cain retire ?

CAIN. Mother, no more ; intreaties are in vain.

EVE. Are my intreaties to my son in vain !
And must thy parents hope so little from thee ?

A I R.

By the nourishment this breast
Gave thee in thy infant state :
By the pangs thy birth did cost,
Banish anger, banish hate.

Stay, my son, thy mother hear,
 The bonds of love unite again;
 See, O see this gushing tear!
 Shall a parent plead in vain?
 Love thy brother, love thy friend,
 And joy and peace shall thee attend.

R E C I T A T I V E.

CAIN. Since you will have it, why, then be it so.

EVE. O joy and pleasure! O my happy tears!

May nothing break this chain of brother's love.

ADAM. Almighty Heaven grant your prayer, but--

EVE. Why do you grieve?

ADAM. I fear; but know not why.

Uncertain is the peace the wicked make;

They're more decietful far than is the sea,

Who, when his glassy surface looks serene,

Hides dreadful storms and tempests in his bosom.

C O R U S.

Daughter of Pride, infernal guest,

Baneful Envy hence away;

Where e'er thou lurkest in a breast,

Thou mak'st the human mind a prey;

As iron is destroy'd by rust.

Thou like the creeping ivy art,

And kill'st the plant which gives support.

Gracious God thy succour lend,

From malice all our hearts defend;

Protect us Lord in Charity;

Who lives in her, shall live in thee;

For thou, O God, art Charity.

}
 Then

Then man, with thy almighty aid,
By no malignant passion sway'd,
His grosser nature shall refine,
And emulate thy love divine.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

PART THE THIRD.

A I R,

CAIN. **I**N gloomy shades I seek, in vain,
Some ease, some refuge from my pain ;
Each place relief denies,
And ecchos back my sighs ;
Nor in my tortur'd mind,
One ray of hope I find.

R E C I T A T I V E.

*Death was denounced on my parent's crime ;
What that dread threat'ned punishment may be,
The favourite of Heaven first shall prove.
He comes. I'll meet him with dissembled smiles.
Dear brother ----*

ABEL. *How transporting 'tis to hear
Again that tender, that endearing name !*

CAIN. *Abel, I'm different far from what I was ;
Let's think no more of anger, strife or hate ;
Together let us go unto the fields.*

ABEL. *No more, I hope, my brother thou wilt say,
My sacrifice alone, will Heav'n accept.*

CAIN.

CAIN. *I'll offer one that shall atone that crime.*

ABEL. *When and where?*

CAIN. *E're long in yonder field.*

ABEL. *Shall I attend?*

CAIN. *Thou shalt, I promise thee :
Come on, for my desires brook no delay.*

EVE. *Where do you go, my sons?*

CAIN. } *Unto the fields.*

ABEL, }

EVE. *Be ever thus in friendship's bonds united,
And let your father's tender fear prove groundless.*

CHORUS. (PERGOLES.)

*Come, O Peace! thou cherub bright,
Source of social joy and sweet delight!
Haste and bless the earth again;
Love and Friendship join thy welcome train,
Hence, Discord, to thy native shade;
No more the breast of man invade.*

CAIN. *Brother, no longer let us tarry here;
The day is far advanc'd.*

ABEL. *I come----farewell,*

CAIN. *Why dost thou stop again?*

ABEL. *Indulge me but a moment and I'll go.
Mother, farewell. My dearest mother! ----*

EVE. *What means, my son, this unaccustom'd flow
Of tenderness in such excess?
Why dost thou grasp my hand,
And press it to thy bosom?
What mean these eager looks, and why these sighs?
Thou would'st leave me, yet thou stayest;*

C

Thou

*Thou goest, yet returnest back again,
And can'st not leave me.
My son! my child! Oh speak! unfold thy mind.*

A I R.

ABEL. Why this unknown agitation,
As I strive to say---Adieu?
Such unusual palpitation
Of my heart I never knew!
Ne'er my parent half so dear
Did you to my eyes appear;
Nor in parting felt such pain
As my breast doth now sustain.

R E C I T A T I V E.

EVE. *Oh, my dutiful, my loving child!*

ADAM. *My Eve! whence 'rose thy grief; why dost
thou weep?*

*Thou fear'st, perhaps, with me, that the professions
Of Cain may hide some mischievous intent.*

EVE. *No----I am happy.*

ADAM. *Happy!----Yet in tears!*

A I R.

Can tears that streaming flow,
Give wounded hearts relief;
And thus expressive shew,
Content as well as grief!

R E C I T A T I V E.

ADAM. *Oh! had you seen, like me, your sons become
The best of friends; like me you would have wept.*

ADAM.

ADAM. *Went they together ?*

EVE. *Yes, unto the fields.*

ADAM. *Oh! my sad heart!*

EVE. *Alas! what means that sigh?*

ADAM. *Under this union, Cain, I fear, conceals
Some wickèd purpose in his ranc'rous breast:
Too suddenly it comes to be sincere.*

EVE. *Our son's a man, and not a savage beast.*

ADAM. *Man will be worse than fiercest beasts of prey,
If he pursue his evil inclinations;
And to indulge them has more powerful means.*

EVE. *These dark suspicions that torment your mind,
Anticipating ills, are the effect
Of our first disobedience unto God.*

A I R.

From that first, that fatal thought,
Which broke th' Almighty's great decree;
With fears our guilty breasts are fraught,
And cherish growing misery.

R E C I T A T I V E.

ADAM. *Torwell I know it; yet my fears encrease:
A powerful impulse, hitherto unknown,
Compels me to pursue my childrens' steps.
Let us divide and search th' adjoining fields.*

C H O R U S OF ANGELS. (CARISSIMI.)

Hark! the piercing, dreadful cries
Of human blood hath reach'd the skies!
Mourn, angels! mourn the guilt of man:
Death his triumph hath began!
Mourn, angels! mourn the guilt of man.

R E C I T A T I V E.

EVE. *Is not that Cain, my son, return'd alone?
What mean his dubious steps!----Where dost thou go?
Nay, shun me not---Dost thou not know thy mother?*

CAIN. *Fatal encounter!*

EVE. *Where, where is thy brother?----
Alas! how cam'st thou thus besmear'd with blood?
Wilt thou not answer? O! I understand---
That blood---my child!---my only comfort!---Help!---*

CAIN. *Ere her oppressed soul resumes again
Its wonted office, I will fly from hence.*

ANGEL. *Stay, Cain--Where is thy brother Abel?*

CAIN. *I cannot tell---Am I my brother's keeper?*

ANGEL. *Think'st thou, mistaken man, to hide thy
deeds*

*From God's all-searching eye? Thy brother's blood,
With dreadful voice, now crieth from the earth,
Whose mouth receives it from thy cruel hand.
When thou shalt till the ground, it shall not yield
Henceforth to thee her strength, but driven from man,
A terrible example shalt be shewn.*

CAIN. *My punishment is more than I can bear.
Oh! dreadful lot! a fugitive! a vagabond!
Wou'd I were hid from light and from myself;
Since ev'ry one that findeth me will slay me.*

ANGEL. *Fear not that, or rather hope not for it,
Death is for thy crimes too slight a punishment.*

A I R.

*Thou, in war and strife,
Shalt drag a loathed life;
Uncertain of thy fate,
Think death's approach too late.*

R E C I T A T I V E.

CAIN. *Into what depth of misery I'm fall'n!
I'll fly, but where? my torture is within ---*

EVE. *Abel ---*

CAIN. *O dreadful name; severe reproach ---*

EVE. *Thou bloody wretch, give, give me back my
child.*

CAIN. *And will my mother then torment me too?*

EVE. *Didst thou say mother? Ah! whose mother
am I?*

Both, both my children, I, alas! have lost.

CAIN. *Enough, enough. I see my wretched state.
I'm driven to despair by what is past.*

*What is, distracts me; and what is to come,
Presents itself in terrors to my view.*

*No hopes have I in God; he either can't,
Or won't shew pity to a wretch like me.*

A I R.

*My guilt now I see, no pardon I crave;
No mercy for me, no hope can I have.
Remorse rends my heart, with anguish and smart.
Repentance, so late, can't alter my state;
And tears flow in vain, to cleanse the foul stain.*

R E C I T A T I V E.

EVE. *Blaspheming, impious wretch, 'tis false;
Th' Almighty's mercies far exceed our sins.
Ungrateful man; he's gone, and will not hear me.
Can he recover, if he shuns the medicine?*

Alas!

*Alas ! do I see Adam there ? Oh Heav'n !
 What is that ghastly burthen thou hast brought ?
 Is that pale corps, my dear, my slaughter'd child !
 I scarce know him again.
 Thy lovely image, O my son,
 Is quite disfigur'd by the marks
 Of thy too savage brother's fury.
 Thy pale face hanging on thy breast,
 On which thy tears are intermix'd
 With dust and sweat : these various livid marks,
 And this warm blood yet flowing from thy wound,
 Shew me too plain the agonies
 Thou hast endured in thy cruel death :
 Thy brother's guilt ; Oh ! dire remembrance !
 My misery ; thy loss---*

A I R.

*All hearts will sympathize,
 The pitying tear o'erflow,
 Each bosom heave with sighs,
 To view the scene of woe.*

R E C I T A T I V E.

*ANGEL. Ye mournful pair, your grief is great and
 just ;
 Yet know that death is not the work of God.
 'Tis not his will that man should thus be lost ;
 'Twas man's vile deeds brought death into the world,
 And your first sin, set wide the fatal gates.*
*ADAM. 'Tis true, we were the authors of his death ;
 He bore the punishment of our offence.*

EVE.

EVE. *His life was pure and innocent. O God!
Can'st thou behold the innocent oppress'd?*

ANGEL. *Forbear, nor thus arraign Omnipotence.
Your son's a type of mercies yet in store.*

This comfort for your griefs th' Almighty sends:

His only, his belov'd son will come,

Upon the earth, veil'd in the flesh of man,

And with his precious blood redeem mankind.

Happy your children in that distant age!

When God's profound decrees shall be reveal'd.

ADAM. *O! mercy infinite! Oh! love divine!*

Shall, with such sacrifice, the race of man,

Of sinful man, be thus by God redeem'd?

No earthly pow'r can celebrate his praise.

CHORUS. (LEO.)

Come, ye bright angelic choirs,

Join your voices, strike your lyres;

Sound the lofty strain ye sung

When, at his word, creation sprung;

When, flaming o'er the dark profound,

The constellations blaz'd around,

And shew'd the well-poiz'd earth in ether hung;

Make heav'n's high dome with praises ring

To our Almighty and Eternal King.

HALLELUJAH.

A M E N.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in Heaven,

hallowed be thy Name,

thy Kingdom come,

thy will be done,

as in Heaven, so on Earth.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kingdom,

the power, and the glory,

forever. Amen.

CHORUS.

Join your voices, friends and I,

and sing the Lord's prayer.

When we pray, let us be true,

and let our hearts be one.

And let the well-loved words

make heavy a light burden.

To one who prays and sings,

the Lord's prayer is a crown.

HALLELUJAH.

Glory to God, the Father,

and to God, the Son,

and to God, the Holy Spirit,

forever and ever. Amen.